DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 709 JC 000 641

TITLE	New Data on PGCC Academic Outcomes: Full-Time Fall Entering Cohorts, 1993-1995.
INSTITUTION	Prince George's Community Coll., Largo, MD. Office of Institutional Research and Analysis.
REPORT NO	PGCC-EA2000-1
PUB DATE	1999-07-00
NOTE	11p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Community Colleges; Higher Education; Outcomes of Education; State Colleges; *Student Educational Objectives; *Transfer Rates (College); *Transfer Students
IDENTIFIERS	*Prince Georges Community College MD

ABSTRACT

Presents data about Prince George's Community College (PGCC) students' transfer behavior derived from the National Student Loan Clearinghouse's (NSLC) TransferTrack program. Compares these to the results of PGCC transfer rate using Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) data for all 1990-1998 full-time, first-time fall entrants. Using both MHEC and NSLC data, the summary transfer rate for all full-time 1990-1998 cohort members was 23%, almost 80% higher than the 15% transfer rate calculated by using the MHEC data alone. The rate boost from adding NSLC data was even greater when focusing on the cohort for which MHEC and NSLC transfer tracking was most complete. By the fourth year of enrollment, 25% of full-time, first-time students entering in fall 1995 managed to transfer to other postsecondary schools, almost double that of the original MHEC figure of 14%. The single largest category of newly discovered transfers were those who left PGCC for Maryland public four-year schools but were accredited with fewer than 12 PGCC credit hours by their transfer institutions. PGCC transference proved to be mainly a local matter: six out of ten students moved to schools within the Greater Washington region and four in five to schools within Maryland. Out-of-state transfer was taken by 17% of students who left for other schools. (VWC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

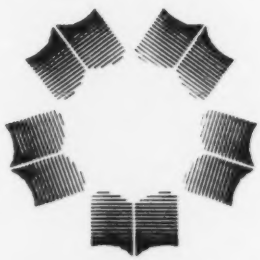
ED 445 709

New Data On PGCC Academic Outcomes: Full-Time Fall Entering Cohorts 1993-1995

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Larkin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)



PRINCE GEORGE'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Office of Institutional Research and Analysis

Enrollment Analysis EA2000-1

July 1999

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Office of Institutional Research and Analysis

NEW DATA ON P.G.C.C. ACADEMIC OUTCOMES: FULL-TIME FALL ENTERING COHORTS 1993-1995

Enrollment Analysis EA2000-1
July 1999

Introduction

In this era of educational accountability much stress has been laid on postsecondary academic success rates. For example, beginning with 1994, the U.S. Department of Education has required all colleges and universities receiving federal funds to report the proportion of students in specially constructed fall entering cohorts who graduate and transfer to four-year schools after specified assessment intervals. Compared with senior institutions, community colleges have always labored under a disadvantage in such reporting since the assessment designs used by most oversight agencies have been modeled upon the academic processes of baccalaureate-granting institutions, with their relatively low student body proportions of part-time enrollees and adult learners focused on career rather than degree objectives.

Furthermore, state systems tracking transference to four-year schools, increasingly the main indicator of academic success at two-year schools, tend to be limited in coverage. The state Higher Education Commission's Transfer Student System (TSS), which all Maryland community colleges rely on for their transfer estimates, is a good example: TSS was set up to identify only those community college students who transferred at least 12 credits to state-related four-year institutions. This of course misses all transfers to independent colleges and universities in the state, all out-of-state transfers (including to schools offering Internet-based programs), any "lateral" transfers to other two-year colleges or to proprietary occupational training schools, and transfers of any kind involving fewer than 12 credits.

Joining in the common belief that the great majority of students who transfer out of public two-year schools continue their educations at native state-related institutions, educational oversight agencies have generally assumed that community college transfer estimates based on such partial coverage tracking suffer little loss of accuracy. However, the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis has long suspected that the TSS data, at least in PGCC's case, may be substantially under-estimating transfer success. For example, an analysis of data tracking transmissions of PGCC student transcripts for FY 1995-1996 found that only 35 percent of the recipients were Maryland public four-year schools; 54 percent of transcript requests were sent to non-TSS postsecondary institutions (Maryland four-year independents 4 percent, four-year out-of-state 44 percent, all two-year schools 6 percent) and 15 percent to employers.[1] Although the correlation

---

[1] *How Do Students Use Their PGCC Educations: An Analysis of FY 1996 Transcript Requests*, OIRA Research Brief RB98-6 (March 1998), p. 4.

between transcript transmission and actual transfer is admittedly loose, such a clear and striking pattern strongly suggested a level transfer diversity of transfer which far outstrips the measurement capability of TSS.

Furthermore, two survey-based studies by OIRA seemed to corroborate this conclusion. The first was a poll of a sample of fall 1984 entering first-time credit students taken six years after the cohort was founded, the second of a sample of fall 1992 entering cohort member five years out[2]. Table 1, below, displays for each study both the survey sample self-reported academic outcome and the academic outcome according to student records and TSS data.

Table 1. Comparison of Student Records-Based and Survey Response-Based Academic Outcomes for Two PGCC Fall Entering Cohorts*

TYPE OF OUTCOME	COHORT 1984 AT 6TH YEAR		COHORT 1992 AT 5TH YEAR	
	Records/TSS	Survey	Records/TSS	Survey
Either Transfer or Award	22 %	53 %	16 %	42 %
◆ *Any Transfer*	*10 %*	*43 %*	*11 %*	*36 %*
◆ *Any Award*	*18 %*	*16 %*	*7 %*	*6 %*
Sophomore Status Only [a]	13 %	19 %	13 %	9 %
None of Above [b]	65 %	28 %	71 %	49 %
TOTAL VALID N	(484)**	(484)**	(2426)	(139)***
Excluded Non-Degree Seekers [c]	21 %	21 %	11 %	7 %
TOTAL SAMPLE N	(611)**	(611)**	(2735)	(149)***

* First-time postsecondary students entering exclusively during the fall semester
** Weighted. Data for the full student record sample for the Records column was unavailable; therefore the weighted survey sample, with outcome data match back from student records, was substituted.
*** Weighted

a . Students with 30 or more credit hours earned with GPAs of 2.0 or better
b. Includes continuing students not sophomores in good stands and those who exited without either transferring, graduating or achieving sophomore status.
c. The definition of non-degree seeking students differed between the two cohorts but was functionally equivalent in the broad sense. Exclusions from the 1984 sample were based on answers to a special question designed to identify non-traditional reasons for PGCC study. 1992 exclusions were based on the standard registration item on reasons for attendance ("just taking courses" or non-response).

◆ Overlapping categories (transfer only and transfer plus award; award only and transfer plus award).

[2] *What Happened to the Class of '84: A Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment*, OIRA Enrollment Analysis EA92-3 (November 1991); OIRA *DataWatch* Bulletin #4 (April 14, 1999).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In both cases, the contrast between TSS-estimated and survey-estimated transfer rate was very dramatic. Cohort 1984 self-reported transference (43 percent) exceeded TSS-captured transference (10 percent) by a factor of four, as did the Cohort 1992 survey transfer rate (40 percent) compared with its official transfer rate (11 percent). Of course, survey-based measurement of transfer behavior is, in its own way, as methodologically problematic as transference gauged by limited transcript tracking: Weighting responses by known population parameters can only go so far to correct sample biases, and response bias toward the socially acceptable answer cannot be eliminated from self-reporting. Also, there were also special methodological concerns attached to each study.[3] Nevertheless, these findings were too strong to be entirely discounted, especially since they were consistent with those revealed by transcript transmission analysis. At the very least and granting that self-reported tendencies to transfer were significantly exaggerated, the two survey studies pointed to a high probability of significant TSS *under*-reportage of transfer.

Transfer Rate Re-Analysis with New Data

What was needed, of course, to substantiate once and for all OIRA's under-reporting suspicions was access to *transcript-based* evidence from a broad coverage source. Fortunately in just the last few years a source offering easy access to such hard data, has emerged—the National Student Loan Clearinghouse. The NSLC was originally founded as a national non-profit service agency, the mission of which was to act as an expert consultant and central data collection point for federally mandated postsecondary financial aid reporting. As a consequence, it became the repository of the largest and most comprehensive collection of postsecondary student transcript data in existence. In 1993 it decided to capitalized on this resource by inaugurating a new service for its institutional participants: the NSLC TransferTrack system, a database organized to identify the flow of student enrollment among its member institutions. It is national in scope, does not stipulate a credits transferred minimum in defining transfer events, but does operate under some restraints:

- TransferTrack's data contributor base of American colleges and universities is beginning to approach 90 percent, but began including only around 40 percent. The extent of its coverage, therefore, varies over time and therefore over fall entering cohorts.

- Pre-1993 transfer flagging was restricted to students receiving financial aid; for later flagging this restriction was dropped, although some participating institutions continued to contribute only aided student lists to the NSLC database.

- Up to 1999, federal student privacy regulations prohibited student record data sharing among postsecondary which was not directly tied to IPEDS reporting; for purposes of transfer tracking this meant that only data relating to students in Student Right-to-Know/Graduate Record System-defined cohorts could be tracked. Since most studies of transfer rates are based on fall entering cohorts in any case, with one caveat this has not been an important limitation. The caveat is that GRS-style cohorts include only students

[3]The main problem with the 1984 study was its datedness. The special concern raised by the 1992 survey was low response rate; fewer than one in twenty of the original members of the cohort completed and returned their mailed questionnaires.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

with initial semester full-time study loads; therefore NSLC data cannot be used to track transfer events for part-time entering students, nor for those in other non-cohort groups like transfer-in students.

Even with these limitations, however, the postsecondary institutional and student body coverage of NSLC's TransferTrack database far exceeds that provided by MHEC's Transfer Student System database. Using TransferTrack, therefore, in conjunction with the usual MHEC data should reveal PGCC transfer rates significantly higher that previous discovered. Furthermore, every transfer flag added to PGCC's cohort databases by means of TransferTrack would be a transcript-validated transfer increasing the accuracy of the transfer count.

As a NSLC member institution, PGCC was eligible to participate in the TransferTrack program, so this spring the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis submitted the Social Security numbers of all initial term full-time credit students belonging to any first-time fall entering cohort during the period 1990-1998 (N=6,396).[4] The NSLC promptly returned a SSN database representing those students from the original database whose transcripts indicated post-secondary study after leaving PGCC (N=1,010), along with data on timing and school of first transfer. OIRA then matched this data back to its standing 1990-1998 GRS Cohort database, which already incorporated MHEC data of transfer as well as other academic performance and achievement indicators, permitting a comparison analysis of MHEC data-only and NSLC data augmented transfer rates. The remainder of this report presents the basic findings of that research.

Transfer Rates, Old and New

Table 2, below, summarizes the impact of including NSLC data in estimating student cohort transfer rates. Final academic outcomes rates, including those for transfer, are shown for three fall cohorts of full-time, first-time entering students. Transfer rate with and without NSLC data comparisons for Cohorts 1993, 1994 and 1995 (shaded rows) were selected for display because both MHEC and NSLC transfer data was most complete in their cases, and because transfer rate findings for these cohort were also representative of those found across all cohorts. As a further test, in addition the table shows the aggregated all-cohort comparison results.

As is clearly evident, the addition of NSLC data substantially boosts the cohort-based estimate of PGCC transfer rate. For example, Cohort 1995 rate of transfer by last possible assessment date (end of fourth year) effectively doubled (199 percent increase)—from near 11 percent to almost 22 percent. The effect was somewhat smaller in Cohorts 1993 and 1994, but still impressive (162 and 172 percent increases, respectively). The aggregate results confirmed the trend, showing overall cohort sample percentage increase of 180. Furthermore, it should be noted that these greatly improved transfer rates remain *under-reports* of the true state of affairs, since NSLC data still falls considerably short of truly universal institutional and student body coverage.

---

[4]As stipulated by federal regulations governing student privacy rights, these were all IPEDS-GRS-cohorts, which along with fall entrants included any students beginning college during the two previous summer terms who also attended the fall semester.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2. Selected Student Cohort Academic Outcomes: MHEC Transfer Data-Only and NSLC Augmented Results Compared*				
TYPE OF OUTCOME	COHORT @ ASSESSMENT YEAR			ALL COHORTS 1990-1998
	1993 @ Yr 6	1994 @ Yr 5	1995 @ Yr 4	
MHEC DATA ONLY:				
Either Transfer or Award	22.2 %	19.4 %	14.2 %	15.0 %
◆ *Any Transfer*	*13.5 %*	*16.1 %*	*10.9 %*	*10.9 %*
◆ *Any Award*	*12.4 %*	*9.3 %*	*5.3 %*	*6.9 %*
Sophomore Status Only	16.2 %	17.4 %	16.4 %	15.7 %
None of Above	61.6 %	60.2 %	68.4 %	69.3 %
NSLC DATA ADDED:				
Either Transfer or Award	29.7 %	32.4 %	25.1 %	23.0 %
◆ *Any Transfer*	*21.8 %*	*27.7 %*	*21.7 %*	*19.0 %*
◆ *Any Award*	*12.5 %*	*9.3 %*	*5.3 %*	*6.9 %*
Sophomore Status Only	13.1 %	13.5 %	12.2 %	13.4 %
None of Above	57.3 %	54.1 %	62.7 %	63.6 %
NSLC Transfer % Gain**	161.5	172.2	199.1	179.8
TOTAL SAMPLE (N)	(482)	(741)	(697)	(6,396)

* Cohort = full-time/first-time fall entrants (includes fall attenders who began in either of the two previous summer terms
** NSLC data-included transfer % / MHEC data-only transfer % * 100

Hidden Transfer Patterns Revealed

Beyond affording PGCC the opportunity of establishing better estimate of overall transfer rates, combining MHEC transfer data with NSLC transfer data enables us to explore transfer phenomena at a depth never before possible. For example, we can now ask the question: What varieties of transfer behavior do our student exhibit? Table 3, below, shows the distribution of the 1,252 cohort students flagged as transfers by either MHEC or NSLC according to type of transfer institution and number of credit hours transferred. The top data row puts the proportion of all transfer students who went to Maryland public four-year schools with 12 or more accepted credit hours at 55 percent. These, and only these, sort of transfer students has MHEC's system allowed us to track in the past. All the other rows of the table show the proportions of previously invisible groups of transfer students.

These fall into two general categories. The first were students who left PGCC for Maryland public four-year schools, but with fewer than 12 accepted credit hours. As the table indicates, by incorporating a number of credits transferred stipulation into its definition of transfer student, MHEC has been missing almost a fifth (18 percent) of our full-time cohort students who have gone on to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

other schools.[5]

Table 3. 1990-1998 Full-Time Cohort Transfer-Out Students by Type of School and Credit Hour Status	
TRANSFER TYPE	% ALL TRANSFERS
Maryland 4-Year Public / 12+ Credit Hours Transferred (MHEC)	55.0 %
Maryland 4-Year Public / <12 Credit Hours Transferred (NSLC)*	18.4 %
All Other Transfers (NSLC)	26.6 %
➤ Maryland Independent 4-Year Schools	8 %
➤ Maryland 2-Year Schools	7.8 %
➤ All Out-of-State Schools (2-Year or 4-Year)	17.9 %
➤ All MD Independent or Out-of-State 4-Year Schools	13.7 %
➤ All 2-Year Schools (Maryland or Out-of-State)	12.8 %
TOTAL VALID SAMPLE (N)	(1,252)

* Students not tracked by MHEC who transferred to Maryland 4-Year Public schools according to NSLC
➤ Overlapping sub-categories of All Other Transfers

The second category consists of students transferring to types of postsecondary institutions not covered by the MHEC system—a "missing" group collectively making up over a quarter (27 percent) of all past full-time cohort students who continued their educations elsewhere. This group is also shown broken down into a series of overlapping sub-categories of some interest: While we have been missing less than 1 percent of the transfer behavior of our cohorts due to MHEC's failure to cover the state's private colleges and universities, around 13 percent of transference due to a "lateral" shift from PGCC to another two-year school[6] and almost 18 percent of transference due to out-of-state enrollments have in the past gone unflagged.

In terms of specific institutions, those colleges and universities which have attracted at least 5 PGCC transfer students were, in rank order of transfer numbers: University of Maryland-College

---

[5]In MHEC's view, someone in this circumstance is not really a transfer student but a kind of quasi-native freshman at the transfer institution. In OIRA's view, however, these student got there start at this college, many completing important remedial work here, and should be considered PGCC transfers.

[6]MHEC does not recognize "lateral transfer" on the grounds that this merely reflects a continuance of community college enrollment in a different locale. We would argue, however, that not to acknowledge transfers to other two-year institutions places these students, as a practical matter of accountability reporting, in the same category as dropouts. At the very least, those students who continue "laterally" and achieve sophomore status soon after transfer or manage to graduate or transfer to four-year institutions from their new two-year schools ought to be considered academic achievers credited in part if not in whole to their initial enrollment school.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Park (407), Bowie State University (191), Montgomery College (62), University of Maryland-University College (55), University of Maryland-Baltimore County (52), Towson State University (44), Salisbury State University (42), Anne Arundel Community College (34), Howard University (22), Frostburg State University (19), Morgan State University (17), University of Maryland-Eastern Shore (10). With between 5 and 9 students each were the Catholic University of America, the University of Baltimore, Columbia Union College, St. Marys College, Marymount University, Strayer University and the American University.

Transfers, Near and Far

Finally, the combined MHEC/NSLC data let's us investigate the geography of transfer from PGCC. Table 4, below, provides the breakdown of 1990-1998 full-time/first-time cohort transfers by location of transfer school.

Table 4. 1990-1998 Full-Time Cohort Transfer-Out Students by Transfer School Location

TRANSFER SCHOOL LOCATION	% ALL TRANSFERS
Washington Metro [a]	57.7 %
➤ *Prince George's County*	*47.8 %*
All Maryland	82.6 %
➤ *Non-PG County Maryland*	*34.8 %*
District of Columbia	3.4 %
Southern States [b]	6.9 %
➤ *Virginia*	*2.3 %*
Northeastern States [c]	2.6 %
Midwestern States [d]	1.4 %
Western States [e]	2.3 %
NO DATA	.8 %
TOTAL VALID SAMPLE (N)	(1,252)

a. PG, Montgomery, Charles, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax and Loundon counties
b. Confederate states, plus West Virginia, Kentucky and Oklahoma
c. States north of Maryland and east of Ohio, plus Delaware
d. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri
e. Remaining states
➤ Regional sub-categories

Not surprisingly, postsecondary schools in the Washington Metropolitan region and in the state of Maryland have attracted the lion's share of our transfers—58 percent and 83 percent,

respectively. Schools in Prince George's county (the University of Maryland-College Park, the University of Maryland University College and Bowie State University) have signed up almost half (48 percent). Farther afield, almost 7 percent of our transfers went to Southern state institutions, 3 percent to schools in the Northeast, and some even traveled to the Midwest or Western regions to continue their educations (1 and 2 percent, respectively). In all, PGCC students found new educational homes in 35 different states.

Summary and Conclusions

In the past, the only source PGCC could access for data used in calculating rates of student transfer to other postsecondary schools was the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Transfer Student System which restricted tracking to those enrolling with 12 or more previously earned credit hours at state public four-year colleges and universities. This caused concern that PGCC's published transfer rates may represent serious under reports of the true level transference from the college. Fortunately, the college now has a ready alternative source of data on its students transfer behavior in the National Student Loan Clearinghouse's TransferTrack program. The great advantage of the NSLC database is that its coverage of higher education enrollments is national in scope, includes information on both public and private institutions, and does have a number of credits transferred requirement for inclusion. The only important limitation is that federal privacy regulations have restricted NSLC to sharing data only on students who were *full-time*, first-time fall entrants The Office of Institutional Research and Analysis has just completed a study of PGCC transfer rate using NSLC data for all 1990-1998 full-time, first-time fall entrants , resulting in the following core findings:

- Using both MHEC and NSLC data, the summary transfer rate for all full-time 1990-1998 cohort members was *23 percent*, almost 80 percent higher than the *15 percent* transfer rate calculated by using MHEC data alone.

- The rate boost from adding NSLC data was even greater when we focused on the cohort for which MHEC and NSLC transfer tracking was most complete: by the fourth year of enrollment, *25 percent* of full-time, first-time students entering in the fall of 1995 managed to transfer to other postsecondary schools, almost double (199 percent) that of the original MHEC-alone *14 percent*.

- The single largest category of newly discovered transfers were those who left PGCC for Maryland public four-year schools but were accredited with fewer than 12 PGCC credit hours by their transfer institutions (over 18 percent of all MHEC/NSLC transfers); nearly equal in number were "hidden" transfers leaving for out-of-state schools (almost 18 percent). Around 13 percent were "lateral" transfers to other community colleges, while shifting to one of Maryland's private colleges and universities turned out to be near negligible (less than 1 percent).

- PGCC transference proved to be mainly a local matter: Six out of ten students moved to schools within the Greater Washington region (48 percent to those within Prince George's county alone) and four in five to schools within the state of Maryland. Out-of-state transfer, however, was the path taken by a not insignificant 17 percent of out students who left for other schools; of these, were mostly to institutions southern states (7 percent), although overall transfers to schools in 35 different states could be documented.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It must be kept in mind that all of the statistics reported above relate only to *full-time* members of fall entering cohorts. However, beginning next year NSLC will offer an improved transfer tracking system, which due to changes in federal regulations will include part-time as well as full-time students. Additionally, its coverage of the nation's postsecondary institutions will be advanced to a blanket 90 percent, compared with the 40 to 80 percent varying with cohort year reflected in NSLC's past data. From now on OIRA intends to include data from this new tracking system in all of its transfer rate studies and accountability reporting. Even with the relative lowering of overall transfer rate resulting from the inclusion of part-time students, we estimate that with NSLC's greater and more consistent institutional coverage we will be able to boast of total cohort transfer rates in the neighborhood of 25-30 percent.

Karl Boughan
Supervisor of Institutional Research